



NEWSLETTER

SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF THE MILITARY



UPDATE ON THE VA'S IRRRL

It's a good time to remind your veterans of the Veterans Administration Interest Rate Reduction Refinance Loan (IRRRL). It could be their ticket to replacing their current VA loan with one that has a lower interest rate.

An IRRRL provides a streamlined process to refinance home loans at a lower interest rate or shorten the repayment period. An IRRRL is usually easier, faster, and less expensive.

With the lowest mortgage rates ever, it may be a good time for some veterans to refinance their VA loan for a lower rate. Just by the veteran calling their current mortgage company they may be able to lower their interest rate by 1% or more.

Veterans can shop around and get the IRRRL through any lender that offers VA loans.

Your current company may not give the best rate, but it is easier to deal with them since they already have all of your information.

Fees associated with the new loan can be rolled into the refinance. It may not be the right solution for everyone, but can definitely help people pay much less over the life of their house loan.

For more information in the IRRRL program, visit:

<https://militarymortgagecenter.com/refinance/va-irrrl/va-irrrl-pros-and-cons/>.



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Buffalo Chip Honorees	2
Veterans Legacy Program	2
Adopt A Soldier	3
VA PCAFC Rules.....	4
100 Miles for Hope	5
American Legion Golf Outing	5
State Cemetery Update	6
MJFSVH Update	7
Elizabeth Dole Foundation	8
SFVAHCS Positions	9
Black Hills Veterans March.....	10
Upcoming Events.....	11

BUFFALO CHIP FREEDOM CELEBRATION

Kevin Holland, Roger Meek, and Larry Zimmerman will be presented the “Bob Hanson Distinguished Service Award” during the Freedom Celebration at the Sturgis Bike Rally. The awards will be presented on Thursday evening, August 13, 2020, at 7:30 pm (MT) at the Amphitheater.

The ability to enjoy the music, motorcycles, freedom, and camaraderie of the best party anywhere wouldn't be possible if it weren't for the sacrifices of our nation's military.



Kevin Holland



Roger Meek



Larry Zimmerman

For more information on the awards and the Buffalo Chip events, visit: <https://www.buffalochip.com/EVENTS/Military-Tributes/Freedom-Celebration>.

VETERANS LEGACY PROGRAM PROVIDES RESOURCES FOR EDUCATORS

We all know educators who are preparing for a different type of school year to begin in several weeks. Whether schools in your area are opening in a virtual, hybrid, or face-to-face mode, NCA's Veterans Legacy Program (VLP) has resources to connect young Americans with the inspirational examples of hometown veterans.

A wealth of educational resources focused on telling the stories of American Veterans can be found at: <https://www.cem.va.gov/cem/legacy/teachers.asp>.

VA, AMERICA'S ADOPT A SOLDIER PARTNERSHIP

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced it is collecting laptop and mobile phone donations through an established partner non-profit organization, [America's Adopt A Soldier](#), to help veterans at risk of or experiencing homelessness stay connected to their health care providers, case managers, and loved ones.

Through these donations, veterans can access treatment plans, medical support, social networks, and more while also following [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) safe distancing guidelines.

"As the VA continues to help provide secure, safe, and stable housing for all veterans, we're also helping them stay connected to needed services, family, and friends," said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. "This partnership makes those valuable connections possible for veterans who might not otherwise have access to mobile phones or computers."



Hundreds of smartphones and laptops have been collected through public and corporate donations. These donations have been shipped to Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) 21, which includes VA Health Care Systems for San Francisco, Palo Alto, Northern California, and Southern Nevada. The laptops and smartphones will go to veterans enrolled in one of three VA programs: [Housing and Urban Development – VA Supportive Housing](#), [Grant and Per Diem transitional housing](#) and [Health Care for Homeless Veterans Contract Residential Services](#). As additional donations arrive, America's Adopt A Soldier will work with the VA to identify additional VISNs in need.

"While America's Adopt A Soldier has had a long-standing partnership with the VA to help veterans at risk of homelessness in other ways, this project allows for the organizations to meet the urgent needs of veterans at risk of or experiencing homelessness during the COVID-19 pandemic," said Mary Keeser, founder and chair of America's Adopt a Soldier and former U.S. Army Officer. "The success of this project will also ensure we are able to better plan for and respond to future or long-term requirements."

Learn more about how the VA is working to protect veterans during the COVID-19 pandemic at [homeless coronavirus](#).



VA PUBLISHES FINAL REGULATIONS FOR PCAFC

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) published its final regulation to improve and expand the VA [Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers \(PCAFC\)](#) with the final regulation going into effect on Oct. 1.

Under the final regulation, PCAFC will include [eligible](#) veterans that have a single or combined service-connected disability rating by VA of 70% or higher, regardless of whether it resulted from an injury, illness, or disease.

This is a notable change to the definition of serious injury from the current regulations, among other improvements aimed at standardizing the PCAFC and improving transparency in the program.

[Expansion](#) of VA's PCAFC to eligible veterans of earlier eras will occur in two phases. The first phase will begin October 2020 and will include eligible veterans who incurred or aggravated a serious injury in the line of duty in the active, military, naval, or air service on or before May 7, 1975. Phase two will go into effect two years later and include eligible veterans of all eras.

"The expanded regulation addresses the complexity and expense of keeping veterans at home with their families who provide personalized care," said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. "This will allow our most vulnerable veterans to stay with their loved ones for as long as possible. Expanding the program and eligibility for the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers ensures we can continue to meet the changing needs of America's Veterans and their caregivers."

Additionally, the new regulation will change the PCAFC [stipend payment methodology](#), define new procedures for revocation and discharge, and include certain advance notice requirements aimed at improving communication between VA and PCAFC participants as well as include information for [current program participants](#). The VA is also standardizing operating procedures for the Caregiver Support Program, providing new training for staff and caregivers, and boosting operational capacity by hiring additional staff. With this expansion, Primary Family Caregivers in PCAFC will also have access to financial planning and legal services. The VA is also working to fully implement the new information technology system required by the VA MISSION Act of 2018 by October 2020.

VA's Caregiver Support Program offers support services for caregivers including training, peer mentoring, respite care, a telephone support line, and self-care courses for caregivers of covered veterans enrolled in VA health care who need personal care services.

Caregivers can visit [VA Caregiver support](#) website or call the Caregiver Support Line at 855-260-3274 for questions.

The final regulation can be found [here](#). If necessary, search for RIN 2900-AQ48, Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers Improvements and Amendments under the VA MISSION Act of 2018.

WALK, RUN, BIKE, OR RIDE 100 MILES FOR VETERANS AND CHILDREN

American Legion leaders are asking for support from their American Legion family members. They are challenging them to put on their walking or running shoes, get on their bikes, or rev up their motorcycles for 100 miles starting now through Veterans Day.

The unique challenge — 100 Miles for Hope — was created to help drive resources toward their Veterans & Children Foundation.

Learn more about this initiative on the Legion website, www.legion.org/100miles and get started by [registering at Emblem Sales](#).

One hundred miles may seem like a long way. But it was chosen with a purpose. The 100-day time frame was selected so that walkers could break it down to a mile day. That's roughly 20 to 30 minutes a day, which is the activity level many health experts recommend.



SOUTH DAKOTA AMERICAN LEGION GOLF TOURNEY

The American Legion Golf Tournament, co-sponsored by the Humboldt and Hartford American Legion Posts, will be held on the weekend of September 12-13, 2020, at the Hartford Golf Course.

This year will include another Hole-In-One contest and other surprises. Entry fee for the four-person scramble is \$440. Golfers who submit advance payments will be entered in a drawing. Entry fee covers 18-holes of golf on Saturday and Sunday, free use of golf cart, and a catered meal on Saturday evening.

Contact Fred Lee at 605-413-9451 to secure your slot or for additional information.



STATE CEMETERY UPDATE

The landscape changes every day at the site of the State Veterans Cemetery!

Curb and gutter is 90% complete. Concrete for the maintenance yard will be placed next week.

Precast niches have been installed and the memorial wall foundation will be placed next week.

Stone on the columns of the committal shelter starts next week.



Maintenance Building exterior is complete and overhead door installation should be completed by the first part of September.

Gypsum board will be installed in the administrative building this week, with painting and tiling installation to follow. Exterior siding will start in the next few weeks.



HONORING THOSE WHO SERVE

Even during a pandemic, it's important that we honor those who have dedicated themselves to taking care of our heroes!

This week SDDVA Secretary Whitlock recognized four great leaders at the Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home. Social distancing and masks played a big role in the ceremony that was held outside of the Home.

First to be recognized was Chris McClure, a maintenance supervisor. McClure recently passed his water testing certification.

Ann Remington, RN, MDS coordinator was recognized for 15 years of service to the state.

Robin Nowlan, accounting assistant, was recognized for her efforts to work with the State Treasurer's office in recovering over \$11,000 of unclaimed cash or other assets for residents at the Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home.



Secretary Whitlock and Chris McClure.



Secretary Whitlock and Ann Remington.



Secretary Susan Whitlock recognizes Wilcox.



Secretary Whitlock recognizes Robin Nowlan.

SDDVA Secretary Whitlock recognized Director of Nursing Susan Wilcox for 40 years of service to the State of South Dakota. Governor Noem proclaimed August 3 as Susan Wilcox Day in South Dakota. Susan began her career with the State at the South Dakota Developmental Center in Redfield in 1981. She joined the nursing team at MJFSVH in 2007 and was later named Director of Nursing.

VA AND ELIZABETH DOLE FOUNDATION TO OFFER RESPITE RELIEF FOR VETERAN CAREGIVERS

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, in partnership with the [Elizabeth Dole Foundation](#) (EDF), announced the launch of a new foundation program granting family caregivers access to no-cost, short-term aid to help those caring for wounded, ill, or injured veterans or service members in their homes during the coronavirus pandemic.

Under the [Respite Relief for Military and Veteran Caregivers](#) program, caregivers of veterans can apply to receive approximately 24-hours of respite care from a [CareLinx](#) professional to help with bathing, companionship, cooking, exercising, grooming, light housekeeping, medical and medication reminders, mobility assistance, transportation, and other activities.

“Caregivers charged with caring for our nation’s veterans face new challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic,” said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. “They have become increasingly isolated and are hindered from getting reliable, outside help. This program provides caregivers compassionate and needed relief during this stressful time.”

Respite Relief for Military and Veteran Caregivers will initially be available in select regions of California, Florida, and Texas. The EDF will work to expand the program to other regions of the country later this year. The [Association for the Advancement of Retired Persons](#) will also be supporting the effort by sharing information about the program with their members in the selected states.

Applicants to the Respite Relief for Military and Veteran Caregivers program will be selected and awarded by the Elizabeth Dole Foundation. Apply at [hidden heroes](#) website.



**Our Vision is an America where military
caregivers are empowered, appreciated, and
recognized for their service to our nation.**





We're not just health care professionals.

We're inventing a new
model of Veterans health care.



Choose 

Now Hiring Health Aid (8 vacancies) Part-time

*This is a temporary position, not to
exceed 1 year from start date.*

**Job Announcement Closes:
August 31, 2020**

For more information contact:
Amy Scott: 605-336-3230 EXT. 7760
Or
Jacqueline Moberg: 515-979-3391

Visit <http://www.usajobs.gov/> for
vacancy announcement

Duties include but are not limited to:

- ♦ Screening of Patients, Visitors, Contractors, and Employees and patient assistance
- ♦ Customer service skills and Computer skills
- ♦ Responsible for performing selected patient/resident related transports to different areas
- ♦ Establishes and promotes effective working relationships with other employees
- ♦ Listens to all customer feedback and acts to resolve complaints within his/her control, and reports to supervisor

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Veterans Health Administration
Sioux Falls VA Health Care System

BLACK HILLS VETERANS MARCH AND MARATHON

The South Dakota National Guard Enlisted Association will hold their annual Black Hills Veteran Honor March (VHM) on Saturday, September 19, 2020. The march is a scenic trek through the mountainous terrain of the beautiful Black Hills of South Dakota and pays tribute to the many sacrifices that this nation's veterans have made in the past and continue to make today.

The VHM was conceived in 2002 as a way to honor the sacrifices of the nation's service men and women. The 26.2 mile march takes place in the picturesque Black Hills National Forest on the Mickelson Trail. An abbreviated 16 mile march is also available.

To register for the event or to serve as a volunteer, visit: <http://blackhillsveteranmarch.com/>.



UPCOMING EVENTS

Aug 5-11—HyVee Stores “Operation Helpful Smile” DAV Fundraiser—Sioux Falls
Aug 24—Barrel House Day of Giving for Midwest Honor Flight—Sioux Falls
Aug 24-27—SDDVA Annual Benefit School—Ramkota Conference Center—Pierre
Sep 3—Veterans Day at the SD State Fair
Sep 3-7—SD State Fair
Sep 5—DAV/727 Poker Run—Swiftel Center—Brookings
Sep 7—State Offices Closed
Sep 11—VABHHCS VSO Congressional Forum—VFW Post 1273—Rapid City—10:00 am (MT)
Sep 18—POW/MIA Day Ceremony—Veterans Memorial Park—Sioux Falls—6:30 pm (CT)
Nov 13—VABHHCS VSO Congressional Forum—Domiciliary Auditorium—Hot Springs VAMC—10:00 am (MT)
Dec 1—Governor’s State of the Budget Address—1:00 pm (CT)
Jan 12—Governor’s State of the State Address—1:00 pm (CT)
Jan 13—SDDVA/SD Veterans Council Legislative Reception

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